



CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Information Systems Strategic Plan

MEETING DATE: December 18, 1996

SUBMITTED BY: City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the City Council authorize and direct staff to implement the plan described in this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: As Council is aware, we have identified the upgrading of our information system as an extremely important objective, affecting our utility billing, accounting, budgeting, payroll and other financial systems, as well as our telephone system, specialized departmental functions and eventually every other type of information we handle. The two-year capital budget carried a total of \$300,000 in resources to address that objective. We felt that it was essential to withhold expenditure of these funds, however, until we had a clear idea of how such resources would be best invested. We have secured some advice from COMSUL Ltd. of Pasadena, and that advice has been reviewed by a task force of department directors and our in-house specialists in the areas of data processing and communications. We are now prepared to move ahead with a series of recommendations that will bring the City up to speed with reference to data processing and communications, and set the scene for further refinements in the 3 to 5 years ahead. The actions we see as best serving the City and its people may be summarized as follows, essentially in priority order, and with responsibilities and timetables as indicated:


1. Upgrade Telephone System

We are effectively at capacity now, and need to upgrade the system. We are presently examining the alternatives, and propose to return to Council with a specific course of action to recommend in the near future (estimated cost: \$95,000 for main PBX, with additional cost possible, dependent upon future analysis). The Finance Director will present a specific recommendation in the near future, with a target date of your meeting of January 15.

2. Increase Central Support

Existing data processing and communication employees are stretched thin in responding to departmental needs, and departmental data processing personnel need more support and policy direction. We believe that we need to augment present staff with one additional person, trained and experienced in data processing and communications to provide this expertise, and we propose to submit a job specification and salary range for your consideration (estimated cost: \$95,000 per year). Some of these funds might advantageously be utilized in the short term to accomplish needed communication system improvements through contractual means. The Deputy City Manager and Human Resources Director will present a specific recommendation for consideration at your meeting of February 19.

APPROVED: _____


H. Dixon Flynn -- City Manager



CITY OF LODI, COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

Information Systems Strategic Plan
December 18, 1996
Page Two

3. Upgrade Financial Systems

The whole complex of financial systems, including accounting, utility billing, budgeting, payroll, etc., needs to be upgraded through the acquisition of new software, in order to continue to serve Council, staff and the public efficiently. We plan to bring you a specific proposal for augmenting our present capacity in the near future. (The cost will be a function of which packages are acquired first, and will be gradual in any event.) The Finance Director will submit a specific plan for consideration at your meeting of March 19.

4. Upgrade AS/400 and Local Area Network (LAN) Hardware and Software, and Connect City Facilities

Closely related is the need to upgrade our AS/400 computer installation and LAN systems, and to provide interconnection between various City facilities. Potential improvements in economy and efficiency are dependent upon such changes. Electronic mail can probably be integrated into the package as a by-product, and provision should be made for specialized programs, such as the building permit system (estimated range of cost: \$90,000 to \$150,000). The Finance Director will provide a specific recommendation at your meeting of April 16.

5. Modernize Personal Computers and Software

Many of the City's personal computers are aging and cannot accept newer software. The oldest of our computers need to be replaced in a systematic manner, with commensurate upgrading of software (initial estimated cost range of: \$75,000 to \$100,000 with continuing investment each year). The Finance Director and Purchasing Agent will present a specific plan for consideration at your May 21 meeting, in time for inclusion in the new budget.

6. Increase Training

In order to take the fullest advantage of the capacities of new hardware and software, training levels need to be stepped up as new assets are acquired (estimated cost: \$30,000 per year). The Human Resources Director will collaborate with the Finance Director in programming appropriate training, for inclusion in the budget.

7. Begin Work on Geographic Information System

GIS could provide a unique and useful tool for virtually all City departments. It would require the dedication of substantial time and resources, but the benefits may be worth the investment. We will develop a specific plan for your consideration. (Cost is incremental over a period of years). The City Engineer will continue to explore this option and report back when a specific program has been shaped, probably in June.



CITY OF LODI, COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

Information Systems Strategic Plan
December 18, 1996
Page Three

8. Provide Expanded Automated Information for Public

Through an interactive voice response system, we can make a vast array of information available to the public through the telephone 24 hours a day. Again, we will develop a specific plan for your consideration (estimated cost range: \$10,000 to \$50,000). This can be a stand-alone project that can be accomplished essentially independently of other projects, and the Finance Director will report on this concept within 180 days.

To the extent that Council concurs in the general direction of this report, approval will constitute instructions and authorization for us to invest staff time in implementing this plan. Toward this objective, it would be our intention to establish an Implementation Task Force, composed of six to eight of the primary parties to this effort, under the leadership of Janet Keeter, to guide implementation of the plan. The task force would then meet frequently enough (probably bi-weekly) to ensure continuity of the process. We will then return to Council with recommendations on individual elements in this plan as indicated above, based on a combination of priority and our ability to fit specific elements into available funding. The use of lease/purchase devices will permit us to make optimum use of available resources.

FUNDING: Each major project would be undertaken only with Council approval, with funds being drawn from budgeted resources. Adoption of this report therefore has no direct fiscal effect, but rather represents general policy guidance.

Respectfully submitted,


H. Dixon Flynn
City Manager

HDF/RC:br